



Inlay Decoration on the Sarcophagus of Jahangir's Tomb

Farah Khan

Assistant Professor of Visual Arts/Visual Practitioner

Lahore College for Women University, Lahore

Email: faraharifkhan21@gmail.com

Abstract

Jahangir's Tomb is located in Shahdara Lahore, Pakistan. This tomb marks the transitional phase of inlay decoration in the sub-continent. Inlay work on the sarcophagus of Jahangir's tomb is noteworthy in its expression and decorative vocabulary. The rhythmic beauty of designs and technique achieved such a height of appreciation and acknowledgement that it has been considered as one of the finest surface decorations among the world's best architectural surface decorations.

It is debatable among the scholars for the origin of *pietra dura* technique. This article aims at tracing out the origin of this technique and to prove it with evidences that it was not purely the European technique but an amalgamation of Islamic and European influences. "The technique developed quite separately in India and is usually characterized by a unique distinct style". (Tillotson, 1990, p. 58)

This article provides references to solve the ambiguity of the origin of *pietra dura* technique especially with reference to the Indian Sub-continent. It facilitates in tracing different influences involved in the formation of decorative designs. This article explores the philosophy and purpose of the ornamental patterns used on the sarcophagus of Jahangir's Tomb and highlights the importance of the local artisans who contributed in the development of this technique.

Key Words: Jahangir's Tomb, Inlay decoration, sub-continent, *pietra dura*, European technique, decorative designs, sarcophagus, India.

The Mausoleum of Jahangir is located at Shahdara Lahore, Pakistan (figure 1). This is situated in the square walled garden known as the Dilkushah Garden which he ordered for the gratification of his beloved wife Nur Jahan, during his life time. This tomb is one of the finest Mughal monuments of Lahore. Inlay work on the sarcophagus of Jahangir's tomb is notable for its decorative vocabulary and it also marks the transitional phase of this technique in the sub-continent. Because of its rich surface decoration, lyrical exquisiteness in terms of designs and technique this tomb is considered as one of the finest surface decorations in the history of architecture.



Figure 1: Jahangir's Tomb. Shahdara, Lahore. (1627-1637).

Source: Picture by author, (13th November, 2015).

This study provides evidences that inlay was not an unknown technique for the Mughal emperors. George C.M. Birdwood mentions that Austine de Bordeaux introduced *pietra dura* at the Taj Mahal but he also remarks, "The origin of the technique was Florentine, but the designs have a thoroughly local character of their own". "The earlier examples of inlay at Fatehpur Sikri, the Qila Kuhna Mosque of 15th century at Delhi, Mandu and Ranpur Temple –all testify strongly against the faulty hypothesis that the art was introduced into India in the 17th century" (R.Nath, 1989, p. 64). "The designs of the Mughal work are Asiatic, mostly Persian. The Indians practiced to transpose foreign importations into an Indian key" (Vincent A. Smith. p, 175). The mausoleum needs preservation from both external and internal damage. The Government should think constructively while forming a few strategies to keep this form surviving.

Jahangir was the fourth ruler of Mughal Empire who ruled the Sub-Continent from 1605 to 1627. The Mausoleum was constructed according to the last wish of the ruler himself. This mausoleum was built during the reign of Shah Jahan, who was the son of Jahangir. It took ten years for the completion 1627-1637A.D. There are three gateways of the complex, two in the south and one in the north. The tomb enclosure is entered through the main gateway on the south built of red stonework and inlay work.

It is a characteristic Mughal gateway belonging to the first half of the seventh century.



The gateway has a large four-centered arch in the central projecting portal. There is a single Tudor arch on each level of the double storey flanking the four-centered central arch. The inside view of the gateway is decorated in the same manner as in the façade. Today the entrance is from *Akbari Serai*, a caravan serai belonging to the period of Akbar. These were used for the guests and some as residence for guards. The Serai has the Tomb of Asif Khan on the west and the Tomb of Jahangir on its east. Gateways on the north and south have been sealed now while the southern is used for entrance. The Serai has a *chahar bagh* garden borrowed from Persia (figure 2).

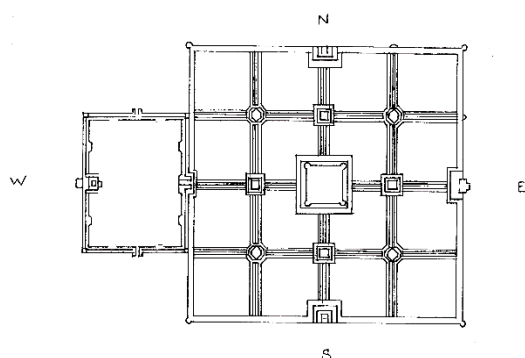


Figure 2. Plan of Jahangir's Tomb and Akbari Serai at Shahdara near Lahore.

(Source: Drawing by the author)

The Mosque on the west is known as the Trimukhi Mosque. This Mosque is placed on a high platform, it has three compartments which are divided by lateral arches and crowned with low domes, the *mehrab* has been made in the shape of a recessed arch. In front of it is a water tank. The façade of the Mosque has been embellished having rich vocabulary of decorative motives with combination of red sandstone inlaid with white marble.

On the eastern side, an enormous entrance leads towards the main attraction of the complex, which is the Tomb of Jahangir. The gateway of the entrance has widespread decorative niches executed in red sandstone, the central main arch has been decorated with original Honey comb style known as *muqarnas*, surrounded by Tudor arches. This gateway is based on a raised platform, approached by three steps. The architectural style and decorative vocabulary of this gateway resembles with the gateway of Akbar's Tomb at Sikandara (1605-1612). The backside of the gateway is adorned with varied motifs executed in fresco paintings.

While passing through this arched opening a passage leads towards the Tomb of Jahangir. The tomb lies in the centre of a square garden; the exterior of the tomb presents a pleasant contrast of surface decoration. The style of its construction is far modest than Jahangir's father and grand father's tomb and was never been repeated in the history. It has been constructed on a red sandstone raised square plat form approached through four steps. The monument is a single storey square structure and on its four corners there are four octagonal tall minarets which are five storeyed crowned with white marble cupolas. This structure is feminine in character, it has been said that it represents the vision of Nur Jahan and its decorative expression resembles with the Tomb of Itmad-ud-daulah at Agra (1622-1628). It differs in the use of the material that is white marble on red sandstone. In the centre of each tower there is a projecting entrance bay in each side. The corridor around the mausoleum is garlanded with most graceful faience mosaic embodied with flowers. From the front a long corridor leads to the grave of the emperor Jahangir. This corridor is decorated with floral frescoes, colored marbles and faience mosaic.

The entrance bay leads towards the burial chamber which contained the white marbled Sarcophagus decorated with precious and semi-precious stones. This sarcophagus is the fore runner of Taj Mahal, lavishly ornate with rich vocabulary of designs and ninety nine names of Allah (figure 3). Sarcophagus is a word taken from Roman vocabulary, which means a stone or terra cotta coffin, often elaborately decorated with ritual motifs, Sarcophagi evolved in ancient Egypt to protect Mummies, and Minoan, Greek, Roman and early Christian examples survive. Along with Sarcophagus another word is used that is Cenotaph which means any memorial to the dead that does not contain a body, a replica of Sarcophagus set on a plinth. The white marble Sarcophagus of Jahangir's Tomb contains delicate work of *pietra dura*.

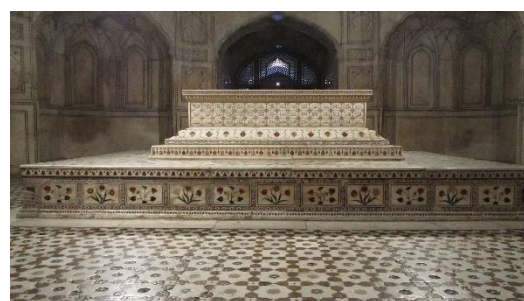


Figure 3: Sarcophagus of Jahangir's Tomb.

Source: Picture by author. (13th November, 2015).



Pietra dura is a type of inlay. Inlay is a specific term used for surface decoration, which is a decorative technique. In this technique, pieces of contrasting colored materials are inserted into depressions over the base of an object to shape decorative patterns. There are three types of inlay i.e., stone intarsia, wood intarsia, and *pietra dura*. Stone intarsia is a type of decoration which would be done on different colored stone surfaces while using white marble on red sand stone etc. In wood intarsia, wood matrix, mother of pearl, shells, ivory, horn, metal and brass etc would be used. "The most significant, the most delicate, the most expensive stone work is called *pietra dura*. It is an Italian word means hard stone, known in south Asia under the term *Parchin kari*. This term, therefore has come to mean small pieces of precious or semi-precious stones put together to make a design, cut out on the surface of white marble. Then precious or semi-precious stones are selected according to the required color of the specific shape of the design, the colored stones are cut according to the precise size and assemble with some adhesive material in a way that the contact between each section was precisely invisible. At the end the surface is burnished which gives it an effect of miniature painting in stone. Then the slab is fixed in the specific area of design" (Dar. 2010, p. 192).

The stone intarsia has been developed earlier by the Romans from whom Arabs borrowed for their buildings in Syria, Palestine and Spain. From the Middle East it was taken to Central Asia for its onward journey into Iran and the sub-continental India. "Inlay was commonly used in the Musalman art of Central Asia, Syria, and Egypt, and was freely adopted for Christian buildings in Italy" (Smith, n.d, p. 174). Its earlier example in Alai Darwaza (Delhi) built by Alauddin Khilji (1305 A.D) opened new horizon of surface decoration in India. The Architectural surface decoration of Mughal period is well known for marble inlay work. The well known examples in Delhi are the Jami Mosque (1533) inside Qila Kuhna and the Tomb of Humayun (1562-1571). Some buildings in Agra Fort (1560) and Fatehpur Sikri of 16th century and the Tomb of Akbar built in (1605-1612) follows the same tradition of surface decoration. In Lahore, the example of stone intarsia in the Tomb of Jahangir (1627-1637) is among the finest Mughal monuments.

This form of ornamentation was well executed under the Mughal patronage. The Mughals were an Indian dynasty, who ruled most of northern India including the area of present-day Pakistan from the beginning of the sixteenth to the

mid-eighteenth century. "In the sub-continent the Mughals were the most important politically, the most influential culturally, and the last in a series of Muslim Dynasties which established themselves from the 12th century onwards" (Koch. 2006, p. 9) As patrons they commissioned some finest buildings and contributed a lot in the means of surface decorations. They were the descendants of Timur. Akbar, Jahangir and Shah Jahan all considered themselves as the representatives of God on earth. The Architecture and its surface decoration of their time is representative of their mindsets. As Jahangir says in his autobiography: "A thousand blessings on a son who has made such a tomb for his father, that there remain a memorial to him upon earth" (Koch. 2006, p. 87). In Islamic architectural tradition, structures over burials are seen as a means to ensure blessings for the dead, as promised to the faithful in the Quran. They provided shade and their height symbolized closeness to God and Paradise. Mughal declared themselves as the great and outstanding tomb builders. "Without the ornament of a building, and be entrusted to the Divine favor in an open space, so that it may always benefit from the countless clouds of Divine forgiveness without any obstacle" (Koch. 2006, p. 88). Jahangir's mausoleum is based on a monumental bare plinth, but accentuated with high Minarets at its corners. "The marble Cenotaph which is now lost, was placed on top, open to the elements; to the blessing rain of the clouds as a symbol of divine mercy. The actual burial that is the Sarcophagus is again in a vaulted chamber in the platform, reached by a corridor" (Koch. 2006, p. 87)

The Mughals brought with them the foreign influence to the sub-continent. The Islamic Surface decoration has a long history of influences including Sasanian, Iranian, Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Greek and Roman etc. So when they reached India they not only used their tradition of decorating surfaces but also utilized the local forms, techniques, materials, and artisans but whenever they adapted or got inspiration from any form and technique they utilized them according to their own taste, belief, religion, tradition, cultural, social, environmental condition, they had to change its character. "The Mughals who were great lovers of beauty and patrons of art, their proverbial love for color and decoration resorted to almost all schemes of embellishment introduced into India" (Nath. 1989, p. 76).

Inlay decoration has a long history behind it. This technique was initially used in Neo-Lithic sculptures of Jericho city dated 7000 B.C-5000 B.C. These sculptures based on human skulls



having definite features, for eyes they have used inlaid shells which was an innovation of that time, these heads were then placed on the graves of the deceased person.

This technique has been used for decorative purpose in early Civilizations as well. In Mesopotamian Civilization from Sumeria, an important example is found from "Bull-headed Lyre (restored) from Tomb 789 King's Grave, ca. 2600 BCE. Gold leaf and Lapis lazuli were used over a wooden core, approximately 5 feet 5 inches high, preserved in University Museum, University of Pennsylvania, and Philadelphia" (Nath. 1989, p. 39).

The use of inlay in jewellery, jewellery boxes, coffins etc could be seen in Egyptian Civilization, they used different materials in this technique like gold, stones, precious or semi-precious stones, metal, bronze, silver. The Death mask of Tutankhamen is found from the innermost coffin in his tomb at Thebes, Egypt, Dynasty XVIII, ca. 1323 BCE. Gold was used in it with inlay of Semi-Precious stones, now preserved in Egyptian Museum, Cairo. (Nath. 1989, p. 80)

From Central Asia different clues have been traced which testifies that Inlay ornamentation was not an unknown technique for the Mughal rulers as they were utilizing it in its initial form. The controversy has been under discussion that the delicate form of *pietra dura* was introduced to India through some Italian jewelers and artisans in the seventeenth century. George Michell mentions that *pietra dura* was an imported technique. It was an aesthetical expression that developed side by side with the passage of time in Sub-continent and reached its peak during the reign of Mughal rulers such as Jahangir and Shah Jahan. "This mode of decoration was created and developed in India"

(Dar. 2010, p. 193).

The early Islamic arts derived great inspiration from the Byzantine traditions which continued to supply both techniques and motifs. "The various artistic techniques Islam has borrowed from all parts of its empire. Many revolutionary changes were made; and those which didn't suit the spirit of Islam were gradually dropped; geometrical and inscriptional patterns became predominant" (Nath. 1989, p. 56). Not a single motif of Mughal architectural decoration is a secluded phenomenon as we have discussed before; it has journeyed a lot before reaching such perfection.

The Mosque of Cordoba in Spain, 785C.E provides evidences of the early Islamic Inlay

ornamentation used in the embellishment of the horse-shoe shaped arches, where white, pink and grey marbles. All these influences through different regions traveled with the incarnations of Muslim rulers went to Persia from where the Mughal rulers got inspiration and also from the rich land of the Sub-Continent which serves at first the main source. "Colored marbles were used on some ceilings at Ctesiphon near Baghdad in Iraq. In some places there appears to have been an Inlay of precious or semi-precious stones. From Syria and Iraq the art seems to have penetrated into Persia" (Nath. 1989, p. 54).

In pre- Mughal period, inlay technique was used during Sultanate Period (1206-1526 A.D). Alai Darwaza was constructed in Delhi inside Qutb Complex dated 1311 by Alauddin Khilji. "The striking juxtaposition of red sand stone and white marble here makes its debut on this land, which became a device of ornamentation later on" (Tillotson. 1990, p. 33). At the Tomb of Ghiyas-ud-din Tughlaq (1320-25 A.D), also in Delhi, "the decoration of the exterior depends chiefly on difference of color, which is effected by the free use of bands and borders of white marble with a few panels of red sandstone" (Nath. 1989, p. 58). The Kalan Mosque, dated 1375 continued the tradition of contrasting colour stones. Examples of mosaic, executed by the use of various colored stones and marble, could be seen in the buildings of Dhar and Mandu, at the entrance of the ancient mosque of Ashrafi Mahal belonging to the period between 1405 and 1569 A.D. "Marble was freely used as an overlay, black, yellow, slate, and other colors being also introduced, while in certain of the interiors semi-precious stones, such as jasper, agate and cornelian, was combined with marble" (Nath. 1989, p. 58). The use of white marble on red sand in the Tomb of Imam Zamin, next to Alai Darwaza, inside Qutb Complex is astonishing in its schematic effect dated 1500A.D. The Jamali Kamali Mosque, Delhi, (A.D.1536) with red sand stone facing relieved by white marble detailing, its coloring is typically Mughal. "It is a hallmark of their early style" (Tillotson. 1990, p. 36)

The Sher Mandal, and Qila Kuhna Mosque dated 1545 both within the old Fort Delhi presents a pleasant contrast of white marble on red sandstone. The Tomb of Isa Khan (1547), the Tomb of Adham Khan (1561) and the Tomb of Muhammad Ghaus (1565) built under Sayyad and Lodhi's Dynasty also proved existing evidences of Inlay decoration in the sixteenth century before the arrival of any European influence. The white marble and red sandstone facing is a continuation of the Khilji and Tughlaq techniques. Another fine



example is the Tomb of Humayun built in 1560's, Delhi, was commissioned by his widow Haji Begum. The richness in the geometrical structure is heightened with the surface decoration. "The grand complex speaks eloquently of an invigorating merger of two great traditions- the Persian and the Indian" (Grover. 1996, p. 124). "Here the architect has taken resort to the use of different colored stones such as red and grey sandstone, white marble and black slate for finishing the facades with a view to bring about a beautiful effect" (Nath. 1989, p. 59). Afsar Wala Mosque, built by an officer of Akbar in 1566, in the Arab Sarai, decorated with dramatic patterns by using red sandstone and white marble color scheme.

Tomb of Ataga Khan (1566), located in Nizamuddin district displays remarkable contrasting color scheme of red sandstone with white marble. The Tomb of Abdur Rahim Khan dated 1626 though badly damaged; but still presents the same decorative technique. The technical difference at this early stage is very minute and is hardly recognizable. "In the seventeenth century the inlay style followed a different path wherein very thin semi-precious stones were used with extreme delicacy in floral and conventional patterns in marble" (Nath. 1989, p. 59). The western facade of the Jahangiri Mahal decorated with black and white marble on red sandstone, located at the Agra Fort (1568-69) follows the same spirit of surface decoration.

The Jami Mosque dated 1571-72, and Buland Darwaza at Fatehpur Sikri (1576-1577), provides examples of inlaid patterns executed during the reign of Akbar. Colored mosaic and inlay on the sides of the plinth and the pavements of Salem Chishti's Tomb (1478-1572) is another fine example belongs to the early part of Jahangir's reign. Akbar's Tomb at Sikandra near Agra (1605-12 A.D), enriched with inlay technique for the magnificent presentation of the building. "Here we come across specimens of a highly sophisticated style of Inlay in a fully developed stage. The technique is as complicated as at the Tomb of Itmad-ud-daulah or even at the Taj Mahal. Its execution confirms that the art of inlay had reached its perfection even in the early years of Jahangir's reign"(Nath. 1989, p. 62).

The Tomb of Itmad-ud-daulah (1622-1628 A.D) makes a step forward in the development of this technique. This period serves as a dawn of a new era when white marble completely replaced the red sandstone. There is a difference in the color scheme of the inlay; it concentrates on black, grey, and various shades of ochre. Together with the

contemporary Chaunsath Khamba in Delhi, "this tomb is the first example in Mughal Architecture of a building faced entirely in white marble, and of a very extensive use of Pietra Dura technique. Both features and their constructions were to become common in the later period" (Tillotson. 1990, p. 90-91). The exterior of the tomb has inlaid work in geometrical, floral, conventional patterns, intermixed with wine-vases, dishes, and cypress trees etc which carries Persian character. "In Itmad-ud-daulah's tomb we have both mosaic in colored marbles and inlaid work but after Jahangir's time the mosaic ornamentation gave place entirely to and was supplanted by inlaid decoration" (Nath. 1989, p. 63). So in that context it is a wrong interpretation that "In the early part of the seventeenth century Italian artists, principally apparently from Florence, were introduced into India and taught the Indians the art of Inlaying marble with precious stones" (Nath. 1989, p. 63-64)

No doubt the artists went through various phases of development, with the change of material such as semi-precious or rare stones for inlay which were necessary in delicate thin foliations, but the technique remained the same throughout. "Jahangir seems to have been responsible for the introduction of naturalistic plants which were inspired by engravings in European herbal books that had been brought into India by foreign visitors. But it was in the reign of Shah Jahan that Indian artists refined such depictions, transforming them into a hallmark of the Mughal decorative style" (Leoshko. 1989, p. 63). The art of *pietra dura* reached its climax with the construction of Taj Mahal by Shah Jahan as a memorial for his dead wife Mumtaz Mahal in 1634 at Agra (figure 16), which due to its aesthetically appealing schematic effects and techniques of surface decorations is among the seven wonders of the World. It was a synthesis of many traditions: Indian, Persian and European.

Another example of seventeenth century *pietra dura* from the reign of Shah Jahan is at the interior alcove of Diwan-e-Aam in the Delhi Fort. It has also been controversial because of the executed panels, one of which entitled Orpheus and his Lute. This inlay of extreme delicacy depicting some foreign birds and thin foliage has been executed in dark black marble plaque. "They were not only designed but actually executed in an Italian studio and afterwards imported into the country" (Nath. 1989, p. 66). Percy Brown also mentions that "this plaque was imported from Florence and as a choice work of art was incorporated by the Indian artisan in his ornamental



scheme just as a piece of exotic brocade might be included in a patchwork quilt” (Brown. 1942, p. 105). A scholar stated that “Austin de Bordeaux introduced *pietra dura* at the Taj Mahal and he also remarked, while Florentine in origin and style; the designs have a thoroughly local character of their own and adhere strictly to the principles and methods of Indian ornamentation” ((Nath. 1989, p. 67).

Mughals were great lovers of beauty and equally great patrons of arts. Under their guidance the artisans along with their local techniques, methods and materials utilized foreign art inspirations in the most refined manner. Some other remarkable examples of *Pietra-dura* could be seen in the seventeenth century varied Mughal Architectural monuments completed under the patronage of Shahjahan in Lahore such as Shish Mahal built by Shahjahan in 1631-32, Pearl Mosque dated 1630-1635 A.D, Shah Burg and Naulakha pavilion dated 1633 A.D in Lahore Fort, the cenotaph of the Tomb of Asif Khan in Shahdara. The best examples of *pietra dura* in India are of Shah Jahan’s reign, “a monument highly accomplished by the historians for its surface decoration is Taj Mahal in Agra, the Palaces of Agra Fort and Red Fort in Delhi” (Dar. 2010, p. 194-195).

The Tomb of Jahangir marks the transitional phase of Mughal decoration in all mediums of decoration. While taking an overall view of the building, it becomes easy to analyze the transitional phase. This building is an amalgamation of various influences. “The most widely used technique in the whole complex is Inlay with difference of material in every section. It is of four diverse varieties having different characteristic features” (Dar. 2010, p. 110). The use of white marble on red sandstone, the precious stone inlaid in white marble, the yellow stones inlaid in variegated marble and stones of different varieties inlaid in the tessellated floors and the roof top. The first variety covers the exterior of the mausoleum. The walls of the exterior are decorated with design and motifs cut in white marble inlaid in the surface of the red sandstone. The varied patterns, designs and motifs along with the technique applied everywhere in the embellishment is same. The arrangement of paneling vertical spaces into slightly sunk niches in red sandstone with inlaid motifs in white marble has been done intelligently. While skirts on the façade have geometrical designs like merlons, octagonal, hexagonal and squares. The typical Persian motifs of Jahangir’s period vine-vases, dishes, and cups have been used in upper panels of the façade.

“Spandrels of the arches are of plain white marble, each displays a circular inlaid medallion” (Dar. 2010, p. 110).

Each medallion has the same intricate detail as seen in the sarcophagus. These medallions are the appealing and striking feature of the exterior. The use of diverse material represents the transitional phase, an amalgamation of previously used technique with the more refined *pietra dura* embellishment. While the other decorative vocabulary used in the exterior is the continuation of a style similar to the Tomb of Itmad-ud-daulah. The only difference was the change of the material that was red sandstone.

The second variety of inlaid decoration is found on the upper three storeys of the four minarets. The outer surface of the three upper storeys is adorned with chevron patterns in *sang-e-khattu*, black and white marble whereas on the top of each minaret is an impressive cupola of white marble. The third is the tessellated floor. “This is not inlay work but in several ways it could be categorized under the same term. These are visible in the tomb chamber. Marble of varied colors has been used to make intricate geometrical designs on the floor” (Dar. 2010, p. 111). The forth and lavishly used *pietra dura* on the Sarcophagus of Jahangir’s tomb is the delicate work which also serves as a model for its fore runner Taj Mahal. “The mosaic work of the Taj is...not an exotic art but of indigenous development” (Nath. 1989, p. 67-68). The plan of the sarcophagus is rectangular in shape placed in the centre of the burial chamber.

The oblong Sarcophagus is placed on a stepped plinth which displays rich vocabulary of interlacing hanging flowers. This sarcophagus is inscribed on the top with Quranic verses, there common theme is to comfort the soul. The technique is the continuation of Itmad-ud-daulah’s tomb, but it is different in design and superior in quality. Moreover, it is significant of its graceful finishing; few of the stones used on the sarcophagus are translucent in character. “The colored stones used were *Aqiq*, *Sang-e-Sulemani*, *Sang-e-Khattu*, *Sang-e-Abri*, *Sang-e-Badal*, *Sang-e-Musa*, *Sang-e-Maryam*, cobalt, basalt, lapis lazuli, *Neelum*, Rubi, emerald, and mother of pearl” (Dar. 2010, p. 111).

The decorative motifs, of different nature, employed in *pietra dura* finishing are pleasing in look. All such motifs comprise *sehras*, iris, rose-plant, scrolls, *gul-noh* etc. On the two sides of the sarcophagus have the similar inlay work set in with *sang-e-Musa* giving ninety nine attributes of Allah in *Khat-e-Suls* on the top and on the foot-side are



prayers to the God Almighty. On this an inscription in Persian language records that this is “the illuminated resting place of his Majesty, the asylum of pardon, Nuruddin Jahangir Badshah” (Dar. 2010, p. 111). The *pietra dura* covers the marble surface of sarcophagus in the form of graceful flowers, delicate Arabesques and refined Calligraphy. “So sensitive and yet so firm is the drawing that it resembles the spirited sweep of a brush rather than the slow laborious cutting of a chisel” (Leoshko. 1989, p. 131). The floral arrangements and geometrical patterns became the trademark of Mughal Art from the seventeenth century onwards.

“The Mughal rulers loved flowers, which are well executed in all forms of art. Nowhere else are the assimilating, transforming powers of the Indian genius more evident, both in the color and the perfect freedom of the lines” (Smith. n.d, p. 175). Floral patterns have long been important in Islamic cultures, where they are generally seen as symbols of the divine realm. “In the Persian poetry flowers are often described as springing from the waters of Paradise. But the Mughal rulers had maintained a special interest in flowers and gardens. Jahangir had been quite fascinated with nature, and his passion for flowers is well documented by his memoirs. Most of his buildings make great use of forms derived from plants. But it was the time of Shah Jahan that India artists refined such depictions, transforming them into a hallmark of the Mughal decorative style” (Leoshko. 1989, p. 63). An inherent grace imbues this art with a sense of extraordinary perfection. The rich color of the blossoms and foliage are more potent than they would be in real life; the deep modeling makes them jump out of the marble surface.

The tendency of the infinite repetition of individual units and the continuous merging of spaces without any specific focal point is the characteristic feature of this decoration. “Particular attention is paid to the principles of repetition and continuous permutation of design. In the Islamic context these infinitely extensible designs have been interpreted as visual demonstrations of the singleness of God and His presence everywhere. They represent unity in multiplicity and multiplicity in Unity” (Grube & Michell. 1984, p. 170). Designs are divided into different panels, everyone having a strong and distinctive style and pattern. The rich effect of the color is emphasized by the use of *pietra dura* that gives the 3-dimensional effect to each pattern. Naturalistic plants are confined to the platform. The upper surface of the platform has a framed flowery scroll work pattern. The origin of the scrolls was

Sasanian, which transformed its character through different influences and then reached the Mughal Empire through Persia. “Scroll is the most important and oft-repeated motif. The geometrical ornament was known in Roman times, but its full development belongs to the Art of Islam” (Creswell. 1958, p. 75).

Architectural embellishment has a language of its own. It is the vivid expression of the thoughts, beliefs, and aspirations of man. In Islam we find ideas, emotions, and a sense of poetry vividly evoked by the beauty of its buildings. In Mughal Architectural surface decoration “a curiously hybrid type of floral design emerged out of a combination of European botanical drawings, Renaissance floral scrolls and acanthus leaves, local and Persian traditional flora” (Grube & Michell. 1984, p. 171). Here the limitless, rhythmical alternation of movement, repetition of curved lines is producing a design that is balanced and harmonized. Shapes left in the background highlighted its effect, as in geometrical patterns, adding another dimension to the overall design. On the platform two types of flowering plant are set within cartouches formed of baluster arcades. Red and yellow dominates in colors. The white marble is an expensive material of surface decoration which has been used in Mughal era having symbolical significance. Here it is used on the sarcophagus which has direct relation with the status of the deceased ruler, the most precious material utilized for the representation of the person having ultimate and supreme power that is the king Jahangir. Every element of decoration used is harmonized, a step ahead than the previous examples.

Pietra dura is not only expensive, labor-intensive but it is also time consuming. It needs proper patronage; this was the reason why this form of embellishment flourished during Mughal period. After the fall of the Mughal Empire some Indian States utilized this craft in their Palaces, but it was not enough to keep this form alive. In India and Pakistan this technique is still in practice but with a difference in material, small sized souvenirs are in practice representing old traditions for the tourist. Few pieces are also available on handicraft shops having intricate details but the standard does not match with the original pieces decorated in Architectural surface. “In Pakistan limited number of artisans trying to keep it alive by energizing the crafts to carry out limited repair on such monuments in Lahore where this technique was once used and later on damaged by Sikh vandalism. A few craftsmen currently occupied by this craft are Nannhey Khan (Pride of Performance) and



Riazuddin alias Raju son of Nannhey Khan” (Dar. 2010, p.195).

No doubt that Islamic Mughal art is an amalgamation of varied influences but the most inspiring thing is the way it has been executed which totally interpret the Islamic characterization, traditions, cultural and social values. They have made great contribution in patronizing such expensive and aesthetically appealing Architectural surface decorations. The most noticeable is the transitional phase of Inlay decoration in the form of *pietra dura* which is an amalgamation of Islamic and European influences. This form reached its climax under the reign of Shah Jahan; the best executed forms could be seen in Taj Mahal, of which the Inlay decoration on the sarcophagus of Jahangir's tomb was a fore runner. Though, after the fall of Mughal Empire it lacked its original extensively executed form but is still under practice. In some areas of Pakistan and also in

India, few craftsmen are involved in repairing and renovating Mughal monuments. Also a few pieces of handicrafts have being produced for foreign visitors. This proves that it was not any form of art which was unknown for Muslim craftsmen but was improved with the passage of time with the introduction of different influences but the spirit remained the same throughout. This monument needs preservation from both exterior and interior. Many designs have been faded and chipped off from the surface and many stones have been taken out by the visitors, this call for an alarming situation. It is the golden heritage of Mughal dynasty so it should properly be renovated and people should not be allowed for writing or engraving on it. The Government should take a serious action against it because it is an inspiring and interesting monument which is also an attraction for the foreign visitors and many national and international scholars.

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